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AUTHOR Crouch, Toni; Walz, Garry R.
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ABSTRACT

The Counseling and Human Development Foundation (CHDF) is the only national philanthropic organization whose sole purpose is the enhancement of individual human development by conducting and fostering programs of research and education in counseling and human development. A 1991 review decided future focus of resources should be on research, professional development, and public awareness/recognition. The research agenda for the 90s concentrates on advocacy research which documents what professional counselors do thus demonstrating the advantages of employing professional counselors and efficacy/outcome research which answers two basic questions: What works? What works best? CHDF's efforts in the area of professional development will focus on expanding professional counselors' skills and understanding of research techniques and grant review procedures. To increase public awareness of the important role of professional counselors, CHDF will develop and implement a Community Disaster Response Program aimed at mobilizing counseling support in times of crisis, such as war, hurricanes, and riots. (ABL)

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ERIC Clearinghouse on Counseling and Personnel Services

2108 School of Education
The University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109-1259

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CHDF—Partner in Professionalism

Toni Crouch and Garry R. Walz

CHDF's Mission

The Counseling and Human Development Foundation (CHDF) is the only national philanthropic organization whose sole purpose is the enhancement of individual human development by conducting and fostering programs of research and education in counseling and human development. As a 501(C)(3) corporation under the Internal Revenue Service regulations, donations made to CHDF qualify as tax-deductible gifts.

CHDF was created in 1979 by the American Counseling Association (ACA) to strengthen educational and research opportunities for professional counselors. ACA, the professional association for counselors, represents 60,000 professional counselors nationwide. Although a separate and independent "not-for-profit" corporation, CHDF has continued to work closely with ACA, serving as its "Partner in Professionalism" to strengthen the counseling profession.

CHDF's Past Accomplishments

CHDF, since its founding, has had a strong commitment to facilitating research both through program offerings at ACA national conventions and through a Professional Enhancement Grant Program. A key feature of the convention program offerings by ACA has been to encourage counselors to undertake research on topics relevant to their current activities. Past research grant winners have also shared ideas about quality research as have the CHDF Trustees.

The Professional Enhancement Grant Program alone has awarded over $150,000 to support research projects in the areas of: counseling effectiveness/outcomes, specific populations, pre-and in-service preparation, public awareness and support, and professional issues. Completed research projects are put into ERIC so all counselors can benefit from the research.

Throughout its history CHDF has also provided support to ACA and its Regions, Branches and Divisions. One of the earliest grant programs initiated by CHDF was the Branch/Region Grant Program which awarded over $25,000 to 32 ACA Regions and Branches. CHDF's financial assistance to ACA in the past includes providing funds to modernize and upgrade ACA furnishings, equipment, data processing and word processing, among other headquarters improvements; purchasing the land upon which the headquarters building is situated, and transferring that land to ACA when it purchased the building; contributing to the purchase of the ACA property on Capitol Hill; and maintaining and evaluating the performance of the investment portfolio available to provide high yield and low fees.

Future Programs

In 1991 the Board of Trustees began a formal review of past accomplishments to determine future directions, and concluded that CHDF must expand its programs in order to keep pace with the needs of the profession and society as a whole. The urgent and expanding need to provide counseling services to a growing number of people led CHDF to redefine its program objectives for the 1990s.

The Board of Trustees began this process by soliciting input from 267 ACA leaders who were asked to complete a Program Objective Survey. This survey asked the leaders to indicate their priority ranking of objectives and activities which could be funded by CHDF. The Board of Trustees then reviewed this information and decided to focus our limited resources on three critical areas: research, professional development, and public awareness/recognition. Taken together, these programs will ensure that professional counselors not only know and use the most effective techniques to help, but also that people in need will know what services can best be provided by professional counselors and how to access that help.

Research

CHDF's program continues to emphasize research as a means of helping professional counselors. The research agenda for the 90s concentrates on advocacy research and efficacy/outcome research in order to increase the impact of funding dollars.

Advocacy research documents what professional counselors do and what roles are appropriate for professional counselors in the mental health arena. Advocacy research demonstrated the need for professional counselors, what advantages are gained by employing professional counselors, and how they can work with other professionals to provide optimum service.

Efficacy/outcome research answers two basic questions: *What works? What works best?* Not all of the techniques and programs which professional counselors have developed have been subjected to rigorous evaluation to establish when they are most appropriate or which are most successful. Providing such research data will improve professional counselors' skills as it helps them determine what the best program is for clients. Lack of research data has also been a hindrance to side

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acceptance and implementation of new programs. Without research to *prove* that a new program or technique works, other professional counselors may be reluctant or unable to try it. CHDF's focus on efficacy/outcome research will help make this data available.

Professional Development

CHDF plans to implement a program of support for professional development opportunities immediately. The initial stage will include pre-convention workshops (in conjunction with ACA's Annual Convention) and in-service training. During 1992-93, CHDF will focus its efforts on expanding professional counselors' skills and understanding of research techniques and grant review procedures. The goal is to expand the pool of trained researchers in order to enhance CHDF's research program as well as maximize the impact of the research which we support. CHDF will work closely with ACA's Professional Development Department to make our programs available at reduced fees so that more professional counselors can participate.

CHDF's goal is to expand this program significantly in the upcoming years so that professional development opportunities on a wide-range of topics are accessible to professional counselors nationwide. This becomes more important as CHDF's research program begins to identify techniques and programs which are most effective—Professional Development Programs will help train professional counselors in these proven techniques. Such a concerted effort of linking research results to professional development will provide professional counselors with the most effective tools available.

Public Awareness/Recognition

CHDF has targeted public awareness and recognition for the counseling profession as one of our top priorities. Professional counselors help people throughout their life spans to resolve problems and face challenges, yet many people are not aware the profession exists. Fewer still know that special training is necessary to become a professional counselor. CHDF wants to make the public and policy makers aware of the important role of professional counselors so that they are accessible when needed.

CHDF's first step is to develop and implement our Community Disaster Response Program. Our goal is to mobilize counseling support tin times of crisis, such as the Challenger explosion, Hurricane Hugo, the Gulf War, or the Los Angeles riots. Not only will this provide help when and where it is needed, but it can also highlight professional counselors' roles in helping those in need. When national attention is focused on the aftermath of a disaster, the role professional counselors play in alleviating personal pain in times of crises needs to be highlighted so that more people can benefit from that service in the future.

CHDF is committed to the counseling profession and the people it serves. Professional counselors offer a vital service helping to alleviate suffering and to prevent an individual's difficulties from becoming major mental health problems. Professional counselors need to be recognized as highly-skilled professionals whose programs are based on sound research and whose skills are continuously upgraded to reflect the most current and effective techniques. CHDF has expanded its support in research, professional development, and public awareness to help develop that recognition.

Conclusion

As the only national philanthropy dedicated to enhancing the role, skills, and research base for professional counselors, CHDF is in a unique position to serve this vital profession. Its close relationship with ACA ensures that CHDF will continue to complement the association's programs, and thus increase CHDF's impact on the pressing issues affecting counselors today. Professional counselors can ensure the success of our programs through their active involvement, not only financial support, but more importantly participation in the development and implementation of program objectives. CHDF serves the counseling profession, and offer opportunities for counselors to advance their profession.

Reference

The CHDF *Cornerstone Quarterly Newsletter*. American Counseling Association: Alexandria, Virginia.

Toni Crouch is Development Officer of the Counseling and Human Development Foundation.

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